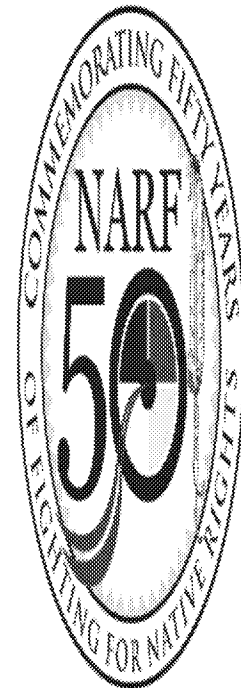


Message

From: National Congress of American Indians [ncai@ncai.org]
Sent: 7/9/2020 4:21:17 PM
To: Berrios, Lisa [Berrios.Lisa@epa.gov]
Subject: Historic Win in McGirt v. Oklahoma



National
Congress of
American
Indians



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 9, 2020

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Historic Win in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the nation's oldest, largest, and most representative organization comprised of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal nations and their citizens, along with the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), the oldest and largest legal organization devoted to protecting the rights of Native American tribes and people, applaud this morning's decision in the U.S. Supreme Court case, which confirmed that the treaty-defined boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation still remain in full force today.

Through treaty, the United States "solemnly guarantied" the Muscogee (Creek) Nation their reservation as a "permanent home" in exchange for leaving their eastern homelands (*Treaty with the Creeks (1832)* and *Treaty with the Creeks (1833)*). In a later treaty, the United States reaffirmed that the reservation was "forever set apart as a home for said Creek Nation" (*Treaty with the Creeks (1866)*).

Today's historic decision by the United States Supreme Court reaffirms that understanding. In issuing the opinion of the Court, Justice Neil Gorsuch said, "Today we are asked whether the land these treaties promised remains an Indian reservation for purposes of federal criminal law. Because Congress has not said otherwise, we hold the government to its word."

"Through two terms of the United States Supreme Court, and as many cases and fact patterns, this question has loomed over federal Indian law. This morning, NCAI joins the rest of Indian Country in congratulating the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and proudly asserting that its lands remain, and will forever be considered, Indian country – as guaranteed in their treaty relationship with the United States," said NCAI President Fawn Sharp.

NARF Executive Director John Echohawk responded to the decision, "In this case, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation had to fight long and hard to protect their homelands, which were promised in their treaty agreements with the United States. In holding the federal government to its treaty obligations, the U.S. Supreme Court put to rest what never should have been at question. We congratulate the Nation on its success."

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About the National Congress of American Indians:

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights. For more information, visit www.ncai.org.

About the Native American Rights Fund:

Founded in 1970, NARF is the oldest and largest non-profit dedicated to asserting and defending the rights of Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and individual Indians nationwide. For the past 50 years, NARF has represented over 275 Tribes in 31 states in such areas as tribal jurisdiction, federal recognition, land claims, hunting and fishing rights, religious liberties, and voting rights. For more information, visit www.narf.org.

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